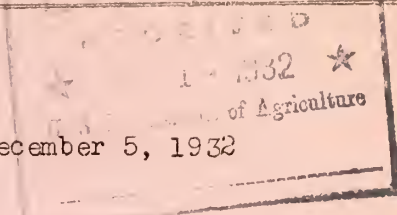


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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, December 5, 1932

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(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Household Savings." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U. S. D. A.

The helpless housewife is very much out of style this year. The little lady who just couldn't sew a stitch; who had no idea how to get a meal without a can opener and the delicatessen store; who was helpless with a mop and hopeless with a broom; who spent her days out window shopping or lounging in her furnished apartment eating chocolates -- this type of wife is decidedly out of style. But the old-fashioned wife is having her day once more. The popular and stylish wife this year is one of the thrifty and efficient kind who can put up her own fruits and vegetables; bake her own bread, if necessary; mend and darn to perfection; remodel last years' clothes; get the most for her money when she goes marketing; and make low-cost foods into delicious dishes.

Whether she lives in the country or the city, the wife who can produce at home the things many women formerly bought is cutting down expenses and stretching small incomes. But all this takes good judgment and usually some skill. You have to decide when you'll really save money by making it yourself and when you won't. For example, suppose you've done very little sewing in your life. Then, the chances are that you'll waste rather than save if you try to cut out and make a complicated dress for yourself. But the woman who has learned the secrets of dressmaking or tailoring often saves a good deal by making over her family's clothes, especially expensive articles like coats and suits.

I think you'll be interested in hearing what Dr. Hildegarde Kneeland of the United States Bureau of Home Economics has to say on this very subject of making things at home to cut down expenses.

If you're thinking of farm families, of course, one of the biggest savings for them comes out of the home garden and orchard. Raising your own fruits and vegetables and preserving them for winter use is the best way of keeping down expenses. The average family needs at least \$100 worth of vegetables and fruits during the year--in fact, the nutritionists recommend for an adequate diet almost \$200 worth of fruits and vegetables. Some families can produce every bit of this at home.

But does it always pay to can fruits and vegetables at home, whether you've raised them yourself or not? Certainly, it pays to put them up, if you have the products in your own garden and if you use the right canning methods. You have a very small expense for fuel, sugar, jars and so on compared with the cost of the ready-canned product.

But if you have to buy the food and then can it, that's another story. You are apt to save little unless the food is very low in price. I know a housewife who put up some canned fruit, that cost her twenty-three cents a jar. She could have bought the best quality of commercial product for twenty-five cents. She spent 4 hours at the job and paid herself only ten cents an hour for putting up that fruit. Of course, ten cents an hour is something. But if this woman had watched prices more carefully she could have paid herself more for her labor. How much a woman makes out of her own labor on home products depends also on how much skill she has and how speedy she is at her work. I know of women whose home work has paid them in savings as much as two dollars an hour. But these jobs that paid high wages for the homemakers' time required a good deal of skill. None of them was highly standardized. One happened to be making fruit cake. Several were special jobs in laundering. But most of them were sewing--the more difficult types of sewing, such as making coats or silk dresses.

Most sewing done at home pays much less for the time the housewife spends unless she is a very speedy worker. In fact, her time may be paid as low as ten cents an hour, when she's making the simpler kinds of garments like aprons, underwear and house dresses. You see, the manufacturers can turn out these simple garments so cheaply that they sell the ready-made garment for very little more than the cost of material. Making over clothes is one of the highest paid jobs for the homemaker--IF she can do it well. In fact, one of the two-dollar-an-hour jobs that I mentioned happened to be making a child's coat out of old material.

But this doesn't mean that making clothes out of new material doesn't usually pay. It certainly does pay, especially if you use good materials and know enough about dressmaking to turn out a garment that you'll be proud of. Even if your time doesn't come to very much an hour, the total savings counts up to a pretty tidy sum in the course of a year. Many housewives stretch the family income by seventy-five dollars or more a year just by home sewing.

Every now and then someone asks whether she can save money by baking her own bread at home. That depends a good deal on whether you have the materials on hand. Many farm families will supply themselves with all the flour they need by grinding it at home or by exchanging wheat for flour at the mill. Of course, these families will save money by baking bread at home. But if you have to buy your flour and other ingredients, the savings in home baking are small. So, unless you are especially fond of homemade bread, you may prefer to spend your time at some job that pays better. So many home jobs provide ways of saving money that every housewife has plenty to choose from these days.

So much for saving by home labor. I almost forgot our Monday menu. And that wouldn't do at all since the Menu Specialist has planned an excellent saving-day vegetable plate meal. Shredded cabbage and spaghetti scalloped with cheese sauce for the main dish. Bake this from twenty to thirty minutes in a moderate oven until the bread crumbs on top are golden brown. Next, buttered green beans. Hard rolls, heated in the oven. And, for dessert, stewed apricots. Be sure to wash the apricots well before you put them to soak and don't cook them with too much sugar. Some day very soon we'll talk over this matter of cooking dried fruits.

Tomorrow? Let's see. How would you like to hear the story of the way homemakers in Florida have been adding to the family pocketbook by home industries?

